



## GROUP 3 – EXPLANATORY NOTE AND JAMBOARDS

### 1. Explanatory note on Group 3's topic

#### **EXPLANATORY NOTE FOR GROUP 3**

##### **What topic will we discuss?**

This group is invited to consider recommendations on the following topic, which relate to aspects of vision element B:

##### **Communication and working between government and citizens**

##### **What is the task and process we will go through?**

Notes 1 and 2 explain how recommendations will be prepared and provide a worked example. You will review the summary of evidence in the explanatory note and the weekend 6 jam boards and identify the 2-3 areas you want to focus on to develop recommendations. You will then prepare the text of draft recommendations and accompanying information to be included in the final report.

Recommendations should be about either:

- Remit Q 2: how we overcome the challenges facing Scotland and the world
- Remit Q 3: what further information citizens need to take informed decisions

And they should also be supported by evidence: And they should also be supported by evidence:

- Given by or discussed with experts
- From the Assembly process and the experience of participation
- From 'lived experience' of members, shared and discussed over the course of the Assembly

##### **Summary of the Assembly evidence on the issue**

The following aspects of the Assembly journey may be relevant when considering recommendations in this area.

1. Throughout the Assembly, you learned about where powers lie and how decisions are taken, including what is devolved and reserved, how constitutional change is made and how big decisions are taken like on the Scottish budget.
2. In weekend 2, you learned about different kinds of evidence, including from experts or through the media and things to look out for when assessing it.
3. In weekend 3 you heard about well-being, including the Scottish approach through the National Performance Framework and about values and how these influence decision making.



4. You met with a politicians panel in weekend 3 and heard about their priorities and how politics is conducted. These sessions stimulated wider discussion about how well informed citizens are about political issues and the need for better information to be provided in order for them to make decisions. You identified the need to improve the quality of political debate, to have more honesty in discussions and to rebuild trust and ensure accountability in politics.

5. In weekends 3 and 4 you learned about a wide range of policy issues around a sustainable country and tax and finances. You learned about the complexity of Scotland's finances and taxation, and heard about ways government could better engage with citizens to be more informed about financial and budgetary matters affecting their lives, including information on tax education.

6. You developed 28 potential areas of action across weekends 3 and 4. This included one calling for a review and simplification of the tax system and a further one (as outlined below and detailed in the annex below) that called the role of a Citizens' Assembly in this process:

- There has been lots of important and useful information shared. Having enough to digest and analyse this as well as we could with more time. Because this is a big responsibility we propose a further assembly on tax and the economy

7. In weekend 5, you heard about collaborative work between government, communities, business and charities to respond to Covid-19, and information has been provided on the role of citizen participation including citizens' assemblies in rebuilding trust in democracy.

Throughout the Assembly you have spoken about how the Assembly process has helped you to understand things better, and how this has challenged you to work together to come to agreement with fellow Assembly members. You will want to consider how that way of working could be important in considering potential recommendations in this area.

### **Constitutional implications**

The Scottish Government and Parliament could take action in this area where any proposed arrangements applied to devolved matters. Should any recommendations cover reserved matters you may wish to consider whether the evidence supports any constitutional change. For further detail on reserved and devolved matters, please see Professor Nicola McEwen's factsheet [here](#).

### **Action in hand**

The Scottish Government's Programme for Government 2020-21 states that:

1. the purpose, values and outcomes in the National Performance Framework are at the heart of the programme – this includes acting in an open and transparent way and having communities that are included and empowered.
2. the Citizens' Assembly has a role to play in ensuring informed, independent and adult conversations about the priorities that are important to people
3. A commitment to a 3<sup>rd</sup> Open Government Action Plan to be produced next year to bring what it describes as focus to openness, accountability and citizen participation in Scotland.



## Annex: Relevant member findings from Weekend 4

<p>The finding that we agree is important in considering Scotland's finances and tax choices is....</p>	<p><b>There has been lots of important and useful information shared. Having enough to digest and analyse this as well as we could with more time. Because this is a big responsibility we propose a further assembly on tax and the economy</b></p>
<p>Reasons</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Insufficient time and too much input in the time available</li> <li>2. We would like more access to the experts for longer in the question and answers sessions</li> <li>3. The decision is too complex and important to rush and this would provide a vehicle to discuss all the great ideas that have been put forward in more detail</li> </ol>

## 2. Jamboards from Weekend 6 on topic being considered by Group 3

(B) Scotland should be a country where the people and government communicate with each other honestly and respectfully; whilst working together with concise and factual information, based on openness and accountability (from area of consensus: A collective responsibility of government and citizens to contribute to society)



What is at the heart of it? What are you really trying to say to Scotland your vision for the country is?

**Saying that parties need to work together on bigger issues**

<p>People need to look out for each other a bit more</p>	<p><b>Need to respect other views</b></p>	<p>Having local advocates, to have the route to decision making more accessible</p>	<p>Citizens that take personal responsibility about their community and environment</p>
<p>Clear communication is essential. Covid-19 has shown what happens when it is not clear</p>	<p>Having a society where some people don't shirk their responsibility to society such as avoiding taxes</p>	<p>Feeling that in Scotland parties do work better together than other places but tensions still there. Not sure how to resolve it</p>	<p>Looking for better relationship with authorities for all aspects of life.</p>
<p>Tension between Scottish and UK Govt (lots of shouting)</p>	<p>Taking personality out of politics is important. Too much throwing mud</p>	<p>If Government debates were more real and with facts then we would engage more, there would be less arguments between personalities and between parties</p>	<p>Having the media be made more accountable for its role</p>

Q: What could be key actions or recommendations?

Citizens' Assembly has shown that it is possible for citizens to understand and come to agreement on difficult issues

Use current situation as opportunity to demonstrate how to be open and honest with citizens

The media has a lot to do with it and should be accountable

Q: Who should be accountable?

When we vote we expect politicians to do what they said they would

Q: How will you know it is being enacted?

We would know when they are collaborating because there would be less shouting! We would see formal discussion and agreement on outcomes

Having local community leaders more involved in decision making in and around their areas

Government having a clear message is important and cohesive

In emergencies we would see coalitions

Politics is too partisan and excludes people and citizens find it hard to know who and what to believe

Covid-19 shows how decisions of government and individual citizens affect us all

Covid-19 shows need to work together by agreement in the national interest and beyond party and political boundaries



Recommendations to enable the people and government to communicate with each other honestly and respectfully, based on openness and accountability

